

## **1st Quarter, 2000**

We are pleased to announce that Tom Woosley has accepted the Gas Pipeline Safety Trainer/Engineer position in our division. In his new position, Mr. Woosley will be providing professional training for all natural gas operator personnel in Tennessee to meet the recently established federal "Operator Qualification" rule. The federal rule requires all natural gas and liquid operators to have qualified individuals who perform a covered function on their system. Although no regulatory rule or program is capable of completely eliminating human error, the objective in providing training to the operator is to reduce the risk of accidents on pipeline facilities attributable to human error. Mr. Woosley will be coordinating his training sessions with the Tennessee Gas Association, Tennessee Association of Utility Districts, Pipeline Employees Performance Group, and other associations to provide professional training.

Our division has recently been notified and awarded an additional Federal Department of Transportation grant. We were in competition with thirty-one other state pipeline safety programs for a portion of one million dollars set aside by Congress to help educate the public in preventing damages to underground facilities. Our division was the top winner obtaining the highest amount awarded to any state pipeline safety program \$46,500. In the coming months with the assistance of the legal division, we will be conducting educational presentations before local law enforcement agencies at their bi-monthly meetings on changes made to Tennessee Underground Damage Prevention Law. Additional presentations will be given at city and county codes enforcement offices located in the three regions of Tennessee. Our division's goal is to educate the public and all individuals to prevent damages to not only natural gas pipelines but all underground utilities.

Glynn Blanton, Chief, who has worked with other state, federal, telecommunications, natural gas and liquid transmission systems, professional excavators, one-call systems and small natural gas distribution operators in the last three years in the development of a national campaign program to prevent damages to underground facilities, has been requested by the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners (NARUC) Gas Committee to give a presentation on The National "Dig Safely" Program. "Dig Safely"

1. Call Before You Dig.
2. Wait the Required Amount of Time.
4. Dig with Care.

Mr. Blanton will be providing free information on the campaign and results of the pilot programs that were conducted in Tennessee, Georgia, and Virginia.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this information please let us know. A more informed organization benefits all individuals!

## **2nd Quarter, 2000**

### **DOT Update:**

Stacey Gerard was appointed as Associate Administrator for RSPA on July 30, 2000. Ms. Gerard replaced Rich Felder, who left OPS on June 16, 2000.

The Federal Office of Pipeline Safety recently conducted its annual review of the TRA's gas pipeline safety program. In order for the Authority to maintain its Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Certification, 5(a) Agreement, with the United States Department of Transportation, Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), the GPSD must conduct annual inspections on all operators and keep TSI classes current.

### **TRA Update:**

The GPSD has been involved in getting the word out about ***Dig Safely***. ***Dig Safely*** is a national campaign to educate excavators and local law and codes enforcement officials about the importance of having underground utilities located prior to excavation. The GPSD has mailed letters to all Tennessee mayors in an effort to spread awareness of changes to the Tennessee Underground Utilities Damage Prevention law. Also, several ***Dig Safely*** presentations have been conducted at meetings with law enforcement and codes enforcement officials to educate them about the changes effective July 1, 1999. Presentations have been given before the Tennessee Chiefs of Police Association and the Tennessee Sheriffs' Association. Several other presentations are scheduled at Clarksville Gas, Paris-Henry Utility District, United Cities Gas – Kingsport, Humphreys County Utility District, Elk River Utility District, Hardeman-Fayette Gas Utility District, Gibson County Utility District, Oak Ridge Utility District, and Memphis Light, Gas, and Water in the coming weeks. The GPSD would like to thank all gas companies for coordinating and sponsoring these meetings. If you would like to sponsor a ***Dig Safely*** presentation, please contact Vicky Nelson at 1-800-342-8359 extension 184.

The GPSD has added a new engineer to its staff. Mr. Bryan Carter joined the GPSD on May 1, 2000. Bryan is a native of Chuckey, Tennessee and a recent graduate of Clemson University where he completed his Master of Science degree in Chemical Engineering. He is a graduate of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology where he completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering. Like other Gas Safety Engineers with the TRA, Bryan will be required to attend training at the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Please join us in welcoming Bryan Carter to the TRA Gas Pipeline Safety Program.

The joint Transportation Safety Institute/Tennessee Gas Association seminar was held August 29-31, 2000 at the Regal Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville. The seminar, which is held in Nashville every two to three years, provides natural gas operators updated information about federal and state regulations and promotes questions and discussion of issues. The seminar was attended this year by approximately 200 gas operators.

Several roundtable discussions on the Operator Qualification rule are being held around the state as well as nationally. These roundtable discussions allow natural gas operators to discuss concerns about the rule and to get further information on compliance. Natural gas operators are reminded that the "Operator Qualification" rule has been published and master meter operators are not exempt from this rule. The rule became effective on October 26, 1999. All operators have until April 27, 2001 to develop their written plan and until October 28, 2002 to have all employees performing covered tasks qualified. For more information on the rule or training, contact the Tennessee Gas Association at (615) 734-1715 or Tom Woosley, Gas Pipeline Safety Trainer/Engineer at 1-800-342-8359 extension 181.